



## Procurement Modernization Team “Newsflash”

PMT Information Technology Transfer Newsletter

9 March, 1998

Vol. 1 Issue No.

3

### *What's New.....PMT*

*“In order to serve you better.....We are providing a Newsletter that we hope you will find informative, interesting and rewarding.”*

#### **PMT Travels to Ft. Collins.**

Members of the PMT from D.C., NFC and Ft. Collins met in Ft. Collins to continue finalizing the USDA Acquisition Toolkit systems requirements. The team met to plan, schedule and refine the Concept of Operations, the alternatives to the PMT hardware and software architectures, and the refinement and categorization of the functional requirements.

#### **PMT Policy Holds Value Engineering Seminar.**

After much effort and coordination, the Policy team arranged and held its first “Value Engineering (VE) Course.” The course was held at the Washington Service Center. The course was taught by the Atlantic Management Center of Alexandria, Virginia. Twenty three engineers and contract specialists attended the course from agencies across USDA. The course proved to be an informative and

worthwhile endeavor.

#### **PMT Policy on the Move with Changes.**

One facet of Procurement Modernization is the streamlining and innovative redesign of procurement policy at USDA. The procurement modernization policy team has been charged with analyzing and implementing, if feasible, 63 modernization opportunities derived from the Business Case for USDA Procurement Modernization.

Several achievements have occurred to date. DR 5000-28 (*Contract Awards to Former Employee*) and DR 5000-4 (*Legal Reviews of Procurement Actions*) were restructured. These revised policy regulations can be found on USDA’s procurement home page. Both policies give the procurement professional more authority to make sound business decisions by eliminating various Departmental reviews and permitting Contracting Officers broader discretion in determining when, for example, a legal review is necessary. In addition, guiding principles for encouraging the use of oral presentations and commercial contracting have been placed on the procurement homepage ([www.usda.gov/da/procure.html](http://www.usda.gov/da/procure.html)). With the FAR Part 15 rewrite, more emphasis is being placed on use of oral presentations. Commercial contracting is the preferred method for obtaining goods and services in the Federal Government. The guiding



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3

principle on commercial contracting provides the steps necessary to help determine whether the product or service can be acquired on the commercial market. FAR Part 12 takes precedence over other FAR sections if there is a conflict in policy. We encourage you to visit the USDA Procurement Home page early and often.

The Procurement Modernization Policy Team is currently analyzing and/or implementing other opportunities. Presently, priority issues include developing an Acquisition Workforce Handbook that will replace DR 5001-1; changing DR 5037-1, *Contracting for Advisory and Assistance Services (CAAS)*; and eliminating tripartite agreements when awarding contracts pursuant to Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act. Some other initiatives include developing a Guiding Principle for Alternate Dispute Resolution; seeking changes to the Government Printing Office requirements; and establishing an acquisition workforce tracking system.

### ***PMT Member Spotlight***



*“Every month, the PMT newsletter will Spotlight a*

*member of the Procurement Modernization Team.”*

### **Mr. Flint is PMT’s NFC Technical Liaison.**

Mr. James D. Flint is the Technical Liaison between The National Finance Center (NFC) and the PMT program. Mr. Flint has had a distinguished career within the Federal government. Mr. Flint began his USDA career working as a management analyst in 1966 with the Foreign Agricultural Service. At about the same period, Mr. Flint was called to active duty serving in the U.S. Army as a Military Intelligence Officer during the 1968 Vietnam “Paris Peace Talks” negotiations.

After his return from active duty, Mr. Flint rejoined USDA and his first assignment was to participate in a Departmental feasibility study for centralizing administrative payments, and on developing a Central Voucher Payment Center (CVPC).

In 1972, Mr. Flint was transferred to The NFC New Orleans where he has served in numerous capacities at NFC to include conducting planning, development, and operation of NFC computer systems. From 1972 to present Mr. Flint has held several prestigious positions: Assistant Chief, Operations Division, and Chief, Evaluation Staff; Chief, Payroll Development Staff, where he supervised the conceptual design and



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3

requirements definition of the redesigned Personnel/Payroll system at NFC; and Chief, ADP Standards, Security, and Certification, monitoring developmental functions at NFC. USDA's representative in the President's Executive Exchange Program, working for Mobil Corp., Telecommunications Department, in New York City; Chief, Evaluation Staff, directing NFC's planning and program evaluation functions. Additionally, he served as Project Manager, responsible for planning and directing NFC's current ADP Procurement process; Chief, Information Center, directing the implementation of cross-servicing initiatives with Federal and USDA agencies; Chief, Administrative Management Staff, responsible for budget, procurement, audit, security, and personnel functions; and Assistant to the Director, responsible for Strategic Planning process and coordinating GPRA initiatives including establishment of performance measures.

Mr. Flint's present position is the NFC Technical Liaison for the Procurement Modernization program. Mr. Flint plays a significant role in the coordination and advisement of technical resources and issues that support and complement the PMT systems effort.

### *Spotlight on Agency Partnership*

*“From time to time, the PMT newsletter will Spotlight Agencies or Offices that are teaming with PMT to implement the future PMT system and initiatives.”*

#### **Information Technology Acquisition Team, NRCS – FT. Collins.**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Information Technology Acquisition Team (ITAT), located in Fort Collins, Colorado, is providing support to the PMT under several initiatives. Under the direction of Edward M. Biggers, Jr., Director of the Management Services Division, in Washington, D.C. who has given his full support to provide assistance to PMT, the three Contracting Officers of the ITAT have been tasked with providing support in the following essential acquisition initiatives:

Don Ensminger serves as the Contracting Officer on a performance-based service contract to provide AGCAS as a “bridge” until the PMT Acquisition Tool Kit is implemented. NRCS Employee, Ms. Debbie Dove, has been designated as COTR on this contract. Ms. Dove will be working closely with Mr.



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3

Ensminger and the Procurement Policy Division (PPD) in the administration of this contract. Ms. Debbie Sanders has been designated as the lead for the development of the acquisition strategy for the PMT “Build or Buy” decision. Ms. Sanders will lead the acquisition team as the Contracting Officer for the solicitation, evaluation, negotiation, and award phase to acquire test software for the Acquisition Modernization Lab (AML).

Ms. Sanders and Ms. Dove, in concert with Ms. Sue Janzen, of the Forest Service, provided the procurement support to acquire the equipment and software for the AML.

All ITAT Members, as procurement business-matter specialists, spent numerous days assisting in the development of the functional requirements for the PMT. The Team will provide support in the testing of software packages at the AML when that phase begins.

### *Trends, Ideas, and Latest & Greatest*

*“To keep our team members up to date.....We are introducing a section in which to spotlight new ideas, business concepts and trends.....”.*

### **AGCAS Updates Available via Internet under New Performance-Based Contract.**

The USDA PPD and PMT announced that AGCAS updates are now available to USDA agencies via the Internet, under a new performance-based contract awarded in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Management Services Division, Information Technology Acquisition Team, Ft. Collins, Colorado. The contract is with Procurement Automation Institute (PAI), of Arlington, Virginia. AGCAS, the Agriculture Contract Automation System, was provided to USDA by PAI for several years under a previous USDA contract, but the new contract marks the first time system updates have been provided via the Internet. This is also one of the first performance-based contracts that USDA has awarded. The contract provides USDA contracting personnel with continued contract document generation capability until the new USDA procurement system is implemented.

PPD and PMT worked in close cooperation with NRCS in negotiation and award of the contract. Under the contract, which includes options extending until September 30, 1999, PAI is to deliver monthly updates to AGCAS users that will be available by accessing the PAI World Wide Web Site



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3

at [www.paimail.com](http://www.paimail.com). The PPD is now preparing information on this contract that will be distributed to the agencies. This information will include the downloading instructions necessary for users to access the monthly updates. Each update will be posted on the web site by the last calendar day of each month.

The performance-based contract approach requires the contractor to meet specified acceptable quality standards in contract performance in order to receive full contract payment. This means that defective product or services can result in reduced contract payments. It also means that performance that exceeds the acceptable quality standard can result in incentive payments.

If you have any questions regarding this contract, please contact the COTR, Deborah L. Dove, at 970-282-1920, or e-mail to [ddove@itc.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:ddove@itc.nrcs.usda.gov), or the Contracting Officer, George D. Ensminger, Jr., at 970-282-1991, or e-mail to [densminger@itc.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:densminger@itc.nrcs.usda.gov).

***In and Around the  
Procurement World.....***



*“We introduce this section in order to keep our team members informed on what is happening in and around the Government and Private Sector Procurement World.....”.*

### **Smaller Contracting Staffs rely on IT to Cope.**

Buyouts and hiring freezes at federal agencies have reduced the procurement work force by nearly 12 percent during the past five years, forcing the remaining contracting officers to develop strategies for coping with a growing workload.

For more on this article, we invite you to the following Federal Computer Week web page.

<http://www.fcw.com/pubs/fcw/1998/0105/fcw-staffs-1-5-1998.html>

***“Conferences, Symposiums &  
Seminars.....Calendar”***

Defense Acquisition University- Acquisition Reform Communications Center (ARCC) has released its Acquisition Reform initiatives broadcast schedule for January and February 1998. For more information,



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3

visit the DAU Website @ [www.acq.osd.mil/dau/](http://www.acq.osd.mil/dau/).

*Stay Tuned.....*

***“Feed-back”***

In order to keep this newsletter current, please give us feed back. Suggestions, comments and ideas can be submitted to A. Andrew Anderson @ 202.690.1048 or **Andrew.Anderson@usda.gov**.